

Common Core Standards & How They Align with the Model School Library Standards

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Introduction

This document outlines how the Common Core State Standards were developed and clearly points out how they are aligned with the *Model School Library Standards for California Schools*. This is critical because it provides significant context for why school library and research skills are needed for students to have academic success. Specific components of the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) should address the importance of the school library program.

Background on the Common Core Standards

Why do we have new Common Core Standards when most states had already adopted their own academic content standards? One answer is that individual state standards varied considerably from one state to another. For example, California's standards were rated highly and termed "rigorous" by a number of outside organizations while other states' standards were not. This disparity became a problem when trying to compare student academic achievement across states. Even so, the federal government cannot simply establish national standards because, constitutionally, the responsibility for education rests primarily with the states. In an effort to remedy this problem the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers began the Common Core State Standards Initiative (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) to develop consistent academic content standards for English language arts and mathematics that would be essentially the same across most, if not all, states. California was one of 48 states that participated in the collaborative to develop the standards and provide input and comments throughout the process.

The carrot enticing states to participate in the Common Core Initiative was the competition for federal funding known as Race To The Top (RTTT). To compete in the RTTT and receive funds, a state had to have adopted standards that were developed by a consortium of states. California's Governor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education decided to compete for the RTTT funds and to participate in the Common Core Standards Initiative. Although California submitted proposals for both rounds of the RTTT funding, it did not receive a grant. During the development of the Common Core Standards, the California legislature established the Academic Content Standards Commission (AC SC) that was charged to review the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) over the summer of 2010. The ACSC was authorized to add some words and phrases to these original standards to maintain the rigor of the California standards. ACSC submitted their recommendations for approval by

the State Board of Education. The *Common Core State Standards with California Additions* were adopted on August 2, 2010.

A Deeper Look at the Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards Initiative started with the development of college and career readiness (CCR) standards. These serve as the anchor standards to define the expectations that must be met for students to enter college and workforce training programs. Detailed grade-specific standards translate these broad CCR statements into age-and attainment-appropriate terms.

The CCSS English language arts standards are organized into four strands:

- Reading (divided into Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, and Reading Foundations)
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language

There are grade level standards for each grade K-8 and for grade spans 9-10 and 11-12. In grades 6-12, there are additional standards for literacy in history-social science, science, and technical subjects that provide additional specificity for the application of reading and writing skills to subject-area content. The CCSS for English language arts balance the reading of literature with the reading of informational text by providing a set of standards for each based on the same set of ten anchor standards for reading. The CCSS also focus on text complexity—students reading text at the appropriate levels.

The CCSS use a three part model to measure text complexity:

1. Qualitative dimensions of text complexity, such as levels of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands.
2. Quantitative dimensions of text complexity, such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion, typically measured by computer software.
3. Reader and task considerations, including variables specific to particular readers (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and particular tasks (such as the purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed).

Overall assessments of text complexity are best made by teachers and teacher librarians employing ~~their~~ professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject. The CCSS also emphasize information literacy and research skills throughout the grades. For example:

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every

aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the standards rather than treated in a separate section.

(Common Core Standards Initiative, 2010)

These research skills are especially evident in the CCR anchor standards for writing which include the following three standards under the heading of *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*:

1. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
2. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
3. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

The Standards Align

Grade specific standards are drawn from these anchor standards at all grade levels. For example, CCSS writing standard #7 for grade two (based on the CCR anchor standard #7 above) states:

Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., ~~exploring~~ read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

This grade two CCSS writing standard is supported by the following grade two Model School Library Standards that identify the steps in the research process:

- 1.2.a Develop questions that define the scope of investigation and connect them to the topic.
- 1.3.a Identify two sources of information that may provide an answer to the question(s).
- 2.1.b Review facts and details to clarify and organize ideas for note taking.
- 3.3.b Record and present information with pictures, bar graphs, numbers, or written statements.
- 4.2.a Share the source from which information was obtained.

Another example is from the CCSS reading informational text standard #7 for grade five:

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

Examples of grade five school library standards that support this CCSS reading standard include:

- 1.3.f Understand how text features make information accessible and usable (e.g., chapter headings, subheadings, captions, indexes)
- 1.4.b Use scanning and skimming skills to locate relevant information.
- 1.4.c Locate relevant information by using specialized features of print (e.g., citations, end notes, preface, appendix, bibliographic references) and digital text (e.g., keyword, controlled vocabulary).
- 2.3.a Evaluate information located to determine if more information is needed and, if so, identify additional resources to search.

There are many examples of how the Model School Library Standards support the CCSS. Please visit the California Department of Education Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/schlibrarystds.asp> and select “School Library Standards Supporting Common Core.”

Additional Resources

The Web page given above also links to a number of other resources for school library staff, including *A Look at Kindergarten through Grade Six in California Public Schools*. This publication provides a compilation of subjects in the basic course of study, including information about the CCSS in reading and mathematics and the school library standards, organized by individual grade levels. Each grade level has a section on the school library standards describing what students would learn in that grade if the standards were fully implemented. This section includes an example of a collaborative lesson demonstrating how the CCSS and the Model School Library Standards can be integrated with other content areas. There is also *A Look at Grades Seven and Eight in California Public Schools*.

The State Board of Education has adopted the CCSS. ~~and~~ Assessments based on these new standards are expected in 2014-2015 with field testing this spring. The school library standards can be the vehicle for implementation of the CCSS in English language arts, especially those CCSS standards related to information literacy, use of technology, and research. Assessment information including practice tests, training tests, sample items and performance tasks is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/index.asp>

References

Common Core State Standards Initiative. *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects*, June 2, 2010, p. 4. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccsstandards.pdf>

What Are the Common Core Standards? <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/tl/whatareccss.asp>